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2012-04-12

# CCC Launches New PASCC Research Initiative

Naval Postgraduate School Public Affairs Office

Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA.

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## Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts for Combating WMD

# Center on Contemporary Conflict establishes new research initiative: Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts for Combating WMD (PASCC)

### Introduction and Background

The Naval Postgraduate School's Center on Contemporary Conflict (CCC) is the research wing of the Department of National Security Affairs (NSA) and specializes in the study of international relations, security policy, and regional studies. The CCC now houses the Project on Advanced Systems and Concepts for Combating WMD (PASCC). PASCC is supporting research on behalf of the Defense Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA).

DTRA's mission is to safeguard the United States of America and its allies from the threats posed by chemical, biological, radiological, nuclear and high-yield explosives (CBRNE) WMD by providing capabilities to reduce, eliminate, and counter those threats and to mitigate their effects. PASCC provides long-term (5-20 year) analytical perspectives to help DTRA leadership identify, plan, and persuasively communicate what is needed to achieve strategic threat anticipation goals inherent in the agency's mission. PASCC emphasizes the identification, integration, and further development of strategic thinking and analysis on the most intractable and future problems related to combating WMD and weapons of mass effects (WME).

### PASCC Mission

PASCC seeks to cultivate interconnected, mutually supportive national and international strategic research community partnerships across all domains. This goal demonstrates our commitment to continue developing relationships and cooperative efforts within and understanding of the Global Security Environment (GSE). Objectives include developing new and expanding existing bilateral and multilateral engagements; supporting the cooperative prevention, control, and elimination of WMD/WME threats abroad; improving security and accountability of vulnerable nuclear, biological, and chemical material globally; strengthening interagency and international partnerships; improving strategic global situational awareness to respond to emerging threats and uncertainty; understanding social, political, and economic challenges and opportunities affecting WMD/WME proliferation, use, and response; and examining the potential for technological surprise (both its opportunities and challenges).

A second goal is to bring scientific, technical and social science faculty/experts to look well into the future and help understand, and anticipate WMD/WME capabilities to meet emerging and future threats and challenges. Objectives within this goal include improving the effectiveness of arms control and other cooperative arrangements as a means to prevent/counter proliferation and use of WMD/WME; enhancing Combatant Commanders' ability to eliminate and respond to WMD/WME threats and vulnerabilities; providing operational and technical support for a safe, secure, and effective nuclear deterrent; developing a robust reach-back capability to facilitate USG counter WMD/WME operations; and developing analytical tools and technology to detect, characterize, confront, defeat, protect against, mitigate and recover from the effects of the full spectrum of CBRNE and WME threats. This also includes examining operational and technical capabilities to improve WMD forensics and attribution.

PASCC gathers ideas for the development of innovative products that encourage new thinking, address current technology gaps, identify developing threats, and improve strategic and operational capabilities to respond to WMD/WME threats including, but not limited to:

- **Research Thrust Area One: 21st Century Deterrence.** Research activities that focus on the new meaning of deterrence in the second nuclear age. This topic will examine deterrence of WMD/WME through an exploration of relevant strategies, operational/technical capabilities & actions, and combinations thereof that the United States may consider in order to discourage or prevent a broad spectrum of threats by potential adversaries, which the United States as well as its friends and allies may face in a dynamic security environment.
- **Research Thrust Area Two: Anticipating Threats and Opportunities.** Research projects and activities that analyze, model and forecast threats and opportunities across the spectrum of WMD, to include the dissection of proliferation forms and pathways, and the use of social science research and methodologies therein. This portfolio examines new and novel threats "over the horizon," including innovative research projects that consider potential threat forms and technologies, alternative futures, so-called "black swans," "bolts from the blue," and other forms of strategic surprise, which include weapons of mass *disruption*. This portfolio also seeks to expand knowledge at the intersection of countering WMD capabilities with cyber, space, and other concerns in the global commons. Focus areas include the nexus of manmade and natural threats, the potential of new threat forms, the increasing influence of private and nongovernmental actors in the production and diffusion of technologies capable of mass destruction, effect and disruption and potential opportunities to counter these threats, while adhering to national and international standards of conduct.
- **Research Thrust Area Three: Countering WMD Proliferation and Terrorism.** Research that examines the nexus of nonproliferation, counterproliferation, and counterterrorism. Research focuses on understanding various terrorist threats as well as the strategies and capabilities across the range of national power to prevent, dissuade and respond to terrorist groups that may seek WMD/WME.
- **Research Thrust Area Four: Nuclear Weapons and Nonproliferation Policy.** Research that examines existing and emerging nuclear weapons policies, nonproliferation activities, arms control, disarmament, pathways and the politico-economic and technical capabilities required to sustain these. This portfolio also examines the role of nuclear weapons in national security, sustainment of nuclear capabilities and strategies on the path to global zero and its potential implications for other strategic capabilities.
- **Research Thrust Area Five: Track II Strategic Dialogues on Threat Reduction.** As highlighted in the 2010 *Nuclear Posture Review Report*, the US is pursuing high-level bilateral talks on strategic stability with Russia and China, which are aimed at fostering more stable, resilient, and transparent strategic relationships. Research projects in this area help to sustain these dialogues and establish similar informal discussions on topics of mutual interest with a range of countries along the Pacific Rim and South Asia as well as other nations where the United States seeks to improve mutual understanding and build cooperative enterprises on countering WMD/WME issues of mutual interest.

### Contact Information

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